

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 9-15 and 18 are now in the application. Claims 9-15 and 18 are subject to examination. Claim 9 has been amended. Claim 18 has been added.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103" on page 2 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 9-15 and 17 have been rejected as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,211,478 B1 to Schoenemann et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,504,906 to Tremblay under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Tremblay teaches that the composite member 14 is treated in alkali metal nitride to remove the refractory metal leaving an essentially pure layer 15 of good conducting metal (column 4, lines 27-33). Fig. 2 and column 4, lines 38-49 teach that after the treatment in the alkali metal nitride, the surface layer 15 of the composite member 14 is composed of essentially pure silver, copper, or gold.

Fig. 3 and column 4, lines 50-57 teach a specific embodiment using silver in which after being treated in the alkali metal nitride, the surface layer 15 of the composite member 14 is composed of essentially pure silver. Notably, column 4, lines 58-70 teach that the pure silver surface layer 15 of the composite member 14 is electroplated to deposit a silver plate 16. Column 4, lines 64-70 teach that the silver plate 16 serves as an arc-resistant material.

Claim 9 has been amended to specify that the arc-resistant material is made of a plurality of different metals. Support for the change can be found by referring to the specification at page 3, lines 17-21.

In contrast to the invention as defined by claim 9, Tremblay does not teach or suggest an arc-resistant material that is made of a plurality of different metals and that has an electroplated surface that makes contact with contact-making points.

First, claim 9 specifies that the arc-resistant material is made of a plurality of different metals. In contrast thereto, Tremblay specifically teaches that the arc-resistant material is the electroplated silver 16, which is shown in Fig. 3 (See column 4, lines 64-70).

Second, claim 9 specifies that the arc-resistant material, which is made of a plurality of different metals, has an electroplated surface. In contrast thereto, Tremblay teaches that a pure metal layer 15 has an electroplated surface 16.

One of ordinary skill in the art considering the teachings of Schoenemann et al. and Tremblay as a whole, without the benefit of impermissible hindsight vision afforded by the claimed invention, would not have obtained a suggestion to modify Schoenemann et al. by covering at least one rated current contact piece with an arc-resistant material that is made of a plurality of different metals and

that has an electroplated surface. The invention as defined by claim 9 would not have been suggested.

Claim 18 has been added to even further distinguish the invention from the prior art. Support for added claim 18 can be found by referring to the specification at page 9, lines 15-16, which teach that the surface of the ring is electroplated, at page 8, lines 26-28, which teach that ring is made of the arc resistant material, and at page 3, lines 17-21, which teach that the arc resistant material is made of a plurality of different metals.

Claim 18 specifies that said plurality of different metals of said arc-resistant material form a surface, and said electroplated surface is electroplated directly on said surface formed by said plurality of different metals of said arc-resistant material.

In contrast to the invention as defined by claim 18, Tremblay teaches that the silver plate 16 is electroplated on the essentially pure silver surface 15 (See Fig. 3, for example).

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 9. Claim 9 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claim 9.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 9-15 and 18 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

Please charge any fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Sterner LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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